



Is your teen getting enough sleep?

Most teen sleep problems show up in school.

Often a teen might be labeled lazy when sleep deprivation might be the real culprit. A number of polls point to this widespread prevalence of teens underestimating the value of sleep. In fact, it is estimated that most high school students get less than 8 hours of sleep on school nights. Most researchers advise an average of 9 hours each night.

Greater danger occurs as teens drive without the benefit of a full night's sleep. Individuals tend to exhibit what researchers call "micro-sleeps" or lapses in wakefulness. These lapses last only seconds, but when driving 60 miles an hour, a second can translate into a "micro-sleep" spanning over 80 feet. It is estimated that over 100,000 crashes occur annually by drivers falling asleep.

What can parents do?

- Educate yourself on physical and behavioral adolescent development
- Stay alert to signs such as difficulty waking in the morning, irritability late in the day and drowsy periods throughout the day. Be sure not to allow a drowsy teen to operate a car.
- Establish consistent bed times when children are younger. Assist your teen to continue adhering to regular bedtimes.
- Talk with your teen about maintaining a balance between extra-curricula or work activities and sleep so the teen gets adequate rest.
- If you have concerns about your child or teens sleeping habits consult a specialist.